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Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

2007-2009 Ritter Administration Accomplishments

Gov. Ritter's vision and strategies on job-creation, education, energy, the environment, healthcare, transportation and smarter government are creating a better future for Colorado's children, families and small businesses.

Despite the worst global economy since the Great Depression, Gov. Ritter, his administration and his partners in the legislature are establishing an internationally recognized New Energy Economy, leading the nation in education reform and building new Industries of the Future.

Gov. Ritter isn't waiting for Washington to control healthcare costs, improve education or create a clean-energy economy. He is working tirelessly on behalf of Colorado's children, families and small businesses to grow jobs, create opportunities and strengthen communities.

Gov. Ritter is keeping Colorado's budget balanced – making the same tough but necessary decisions that families and businesses are making – while minimizing pain, modernizing government and positioning Colorado for a strong and sustainable recovery.

Economic Development

Gov. Ritter is advancing strategies that create jobs, help small businesses, spur innovation, increase manufacturing and grow knowledge-based Industries of the Future like the New Energy Economy, aerospace, biosciences and technology. He is enacting the most aggressive economic growth initiatives in Colorado in decades, and his strategies are working, as evidenced by a comparatively low unemployment rate, recent job growth and what analysts call one of the best economic outlooks in the country. Legislative highlights include:

- Cutting taxes for 30,000 small businesses (House Bill 08-1225, Rice/Williams).
- Creating the Job Growth Incentive Program, which in just its first few months is helping to create hundreds of new jobs (HB 09-1001, Rice/Heath).
- Reviving an access-to-capital program that is helping Colorado's small businesses get the loans and credit they need (SB 09-67, Heath/Marostica & Gagliardi).
- Enacting the first new sustainable transportation-funding initiative in almost 20 years, FASTER, to keep roads and bridges safe and create jobs. (SB 09-108, Gibbs/Rice).

New Energy Economy

Gov. Ritter is making Colorado's New Energy Economy a national model for creating jobs, attracting companies and producing innovative clean-energy technologies. With Colorado's abundant supplies of wind, sun and natural gas, nearly 17,000 Coloradans now work in renewable energy and energy research jobs, the fourth-highest concentration in the country. Gov. Ritter also enacted Colorado's first Climate Action Plan and is leading Colorado to a more diverse, secure and affordable clean-energy future through legislation such as:

- HB07-1281, Renewable Energy Standard (Schwartz/Pommer & Witwer). Doubles Colorado's voter-approved renewable energy standard, requiring the state's biggest utilities to generate 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2020.
- HB08-1160, Net Metering (Solano/Shaffer & Isgar). Allows homeowners to reduce their electric bills by selling excess solar energy back to their utility company.
- SB 09-51, Renewable Energy Financing (M. Carroll/Levy). Creates a lease-to-own financing tool to help homeowners afford solar panels, and creates new jobs for installers.

Cutting the Budget & Making Government More Efficient

Since mid-2008, Gov. Ritter has closed \$2 billion in recession-caused shortfalls to keep the state budget balanced. His proposed FY10-11 budget also calls for closing a \$1 billion shortfall. While making tough budget-cutting decisions, Gov. Ritter also is creating a more effective, streamlined and innovative government for Colorado.

Gov. Ritter's Government Efficiency and Management (GEM) Review identified more than \$200 million in savings and benefits. Gov. Ritter is implementing new accountability and transparency standards, increasing the use of digital technology and automation, eliminating waste and fraud, and demanding that all departments refocus and refine their missions.

Education

Gov. Ritter is making Colorado a national education leader, expanding pre-school and full-day kindergarten for thousands of children, investing \$1 billion to fix crumbling schools, and enacting numerous other student-centered reforms. Upon taking office, he established a P-20 Education Council chaired by Lt. Governor O'Brien to help achieve his 10-year education goals of cutting the dropout rate in half, reducing achievement gaps and doubling the number of in-state Colorado students who earn college degrees or certificates. Legislative highlights:

- Senate Bill 08-212, the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids. This historic measure began a complete review and realignment of education in Colorado from pre-school to college. It established new definitions of what it takes for children to be ready for school and ready for the workforce or college. It also sets new content and assessment standards for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, based on the premise that all students should graduate from high school ready for college or a career.
- House Bill 1319, Concurrent Enrollment in Public High Schools (Merrifield and Massey/Williams). Creates the nation's first statewide five-year dual-degree program, allowing students to concurrently earn a high school diploma and college associate's degree in five years.

Health Care

Gov. Ritter isn't waiting for Washington when it comes to reducing health care costs, improving quality and making care and coverage more secure, reliable and available. Gov. Ritter has accomplished more in three years than other governors have done in the past 40 when it comes to improving health care in Colorado. He has established Colorado as a national model and is leading the state to a healthier future.

The Colorado Healthcare Affordability Act of 2009 is among his signature accomplishments. The most significant healthcare reform measure in Colorado in decades, this landmark program will address cost-shifting and the high cost of uncompensated care, two of the main reasons for skyrocketing costs for small businesses and healthcare providers. The Act will provide coverage to 100,000 uninsured Coloradans – without costing employers or taxpayers a penny more.

Protecting Coloradans

Gov. Ritter is protecting Colorado's safety net and strengthening the state's public safety programs. His innovative anti-recidivism programs are slowing the rate of prison-population growth and prison spending. He established Colorado's first Child Protection Training Academy, which, along with two dozen other steps, will keep our children safe. Similarly, he created the Governor's Office of Homeland Security to keep all Coloradans safe. To address the foreclosure crisis, he has enacted numerous initiatives that keep responsible borrowers in their homes and crack down on unscrupulous mortgage lenders. Gov. Ritter also has helped extend and increase unemployment benefits and expand job-training programs.